

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY SANA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HAVANA 1804

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV MILI ET CG AO YS CU
SUBJ: CUBAN POLICY IN AFRICA

1. SUMMARY: CASTRO THIRD WORLD ADVISOR PRAISES RECENT VANCE STATEMENT ON AFRICA AND APPLAUDS SEEMING NEW DIRECTION OF US ANGOLA POLICY. HE ANTICIPATES DISARMING OF EX-KATANGANS SOON. HE EXPRESSES BEWILDERMENT OVER YEMEN SITUATION AND SEES NO EASY POLITICAL SOLUTION IN ERITREA. END SUMMARY.

2. IN COURSE OF FIDEL CASTRO RECEPTION FOR AMERICAN MAYORS, JUNE 27, ACTING USINT CHIEF HAD OPPORTUNITY TO CONVERSE WITH OSMANY CIENFUEGOS, SECRETARY OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND POLITICAL ADVISOR TO CASTRO ON AFRICA/ MIDDLE EAST MATTERS.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 HAVANA 01804 01 OF 02 290447Z

3. ON AFRICA GENERALLY AND ANGOLA PARTICULARLY, CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT CUBANS ARE VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED WITH SECRETARY VANCE'S RECENT AFRICAN POLICY STATEMENT. THEY HEARTILY APPROVE OF AMBASSADOR MCHENRY'S TRIP TO LUANDA, THOUGH THEY HAVE NOT YET BEEN APPRAISED OF RESULTS. CUBANS, CIENFUEGOS SAID, SUPPORT ANY MOVES THAT WILL INCREASE INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS AND SECURITY OF ANGOLAN REGIME

(CIENFUEGOS PRAISED RECENT EANES-NETO CONVERSATIONS IN THIS CONNECTION). CIENFUEGOS ADDED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD ONCE MADE UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO MEDIATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ZAIRE AND ANGOLA. HE SAID THAT WESTERN POWERS ARE NOW IN BETTER POSITION TO IMPOSE CONDITIONS ON MOBUTU AND, THEREFORE, TO HELP TERMINATE ANTI-NETO (FNLA, FLEC, UNITA) ACTIVITY FROM ZAIRE.

4. CIENFUEGOS ADDED THAT CUBANS ARE ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT IN REPORT THEY HAVE RECEIVED THAT CIA OFFERED SUPPORT TO UNITA. HE SAID THAT US HAS NOT DENIED ACCUSATION, BUT ADDED HIS PERSONAL OPINION THAT CIA MIGHT HAVE BEEN OFFERING AID ON NON-OFFICIAL BASIS. CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S ASSURANCES THAT US WILL NOT VIOLATE CLARK AMENDMENT ARE WELCOME AND HAVE BEEN DULY NOTED BY CUBAN LEADERSHIP.

5. CIENFUEGOS CONTINUED THAT CUBANS, IN CONSIDERING NECESSARY TROOP LEVELS IN ANGOLA, ARE CLOSELY WATCHING BEHAVIOR OF ZAIRE. SOME CUBAN TROOP REDUCTION COULD OCCUR IN "LESS THAN ONE YEAR, IN ONE YEAR, OR IN PERIOD BEYOND ONE YEAR," DEPENDING ON BEHAVIOR OF ZAIRE. (FYI: CIENFUEGOS HARDLY REFERRED TO SOUTH AFRICA - A CURIOUS OMISSION UNLESS CUBANS ARE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT WESTERN FIVE PROPOSALS ON NAMIBIA WILL BE SUCCESSFUL. END FYI.) CIENFUEGOS ADDED THAT, IF US WANTS TO TALK ABOUT REDUCTION OF CUBAN TROOPS, IT MUST DEAL DIRECTLY, AND MADE ARRANGEMENTS, WITH NETO. CUBA CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 HAVANA 01804 01 OF 02 290447Z

WILL MAKE NO BILATERAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH US.

6. ON KATANGA GERDARMES, CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT NETO HAS PUBLICLY DECLARED THAT HE IS READY TO DISARM THEM. CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT TWO KATANGAN INVASIONS ARE ALREADY TOO MUCH AND THAT ANGOLA NEEDS PEACE. HE POINTED TO CASTRO'S STATEMENT THAT CUBANS WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP ANGOLANS ON THIS MATTER IF NETO ASKS. CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT CUBAN HELP WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE NEEDED SINCE EX-KATANGANS ARE DISPIRITED LOT.

7. TURNING TO THE HORN AREA, CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT YEMEN SITUATION IS EXTREMELY CONFUSING. HE SAID THAT HE HAS NO INFORMATION INSTIGATION OF KILLING OF YAR PRESIDENT AL-GHASMI, BUT ASSERTED THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAS ALWAYS OPPOSED DRAWING CLOSER OF YAR AND PDRY - A DEVELOPMENT HE SENSED WAS IMMINENT. (CIENFUEGOS SEEMED TO BE SUGGESTING, CONTRARY TO WESTERN ESTABLISHED WISDOM, THAT PDRY WOULD ATTRACT ITS CONFEREES AND NOT VICE VERSA.)

8. CIENFUEGOS WOULD NOT DISMISS POSSIBILITY THAT PDRY HAS BEEN PRESSURED BY IRAQIS - "STRONG BACKERS OF ERITREANS" - TO WITHDRAW PDRY TROOPS FROM ETHIOPIA. HE SAID, HOWEVER,

THAT SUCH A WITHDRAWAL, IF IT OCCURED, WOULD ONLY HAVE SYMBOLIC EFFECT, SINCE PDRY FORCES PRESENT IN ETHIOPIA ARE MINUTE.

9. ON ERITREA, CIENFUEGOS SAID THAT EPLF AND ELF HAVE, INDEED, CALLED FOR INDEPENDENCE, BUT CUBANS ARE SEEKING TO SECURE MORE FLEXIBILITY BOTH IN ERITREAN POSITION AND THAT OF MENGISTU. (FYI CIENFUEGOS CHARACTERIZED MENGISTU AS "VERY DIFFICULT" PERSON. HE ALSO INDICATED THAT CUBA WOULD SOON BE SENDING NEW AMBASSADOR TO ADDIS TO REPLACE WITHDRAWN PEREZ NOVOA. END FYI.) CIENFUEGOS DECLINED TO BE DRAWN OUT ON HOW PRECISELY CUBANS WOULD SEEK TO PROMOTE ETHIOPIAN AND ERITREAN FLEXIBILITY, BUT HE ALLOWED THAT TASK IS "EXTRAORDINARILY DIFFICULT." HE STATED THAT HE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 HAVANA 01804 01 OF 02 290447Z

HAD SEEN REPORT FROM TWO WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS INDICATING THAT CUBANS ARE STILL WELL THOUGHT OF BY SOME ERITREANS, BUT HE STATED THAT CUBANS CAN NO LONGER BACK ERITREAN ASPIRATIONS FULLY.

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PAGE 01 HAVANA 01804 02 OF 02 290445Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HAVANA 1804

EXDIS

10. CIENFUEGOS EMPHASIZED THAT OPPOSITION TO ERITREAN INDEPENDENCE IS ETHIOPIAN, NOT CUBAN, POSITION, BUT ONE WHICH CUBA MUST SUPPORT. CIENFUEGOS HOTLY CONTESTED AUTHENTICITY OF CASTRO'S REPORTED STATEMENT TO US JOURNALISTS, DURING CODEL SOLARZ MEETING, THAT MODEL FOR FUTURE ERITREAN AUTONOMY WOULD BE FORMULA ESTABLISHED BY SOVIET CONSTITUTION. (COMMENT: CASTRO'S COMMENTS TO THIS EFFECT WERE TAPE RECORDED BY US JOURNALISTS. CIENFUEGOS SEEMED TO BE SUGGESTING THAT CUBANS FAVOR MORE SUBSTANTIAL AUTONOMY FOR ERITREA THAN THAT WHICH EXISTS FOR USSR REPUBLICS.)

1. WHEN QUERIED AS TO WHETHER CUBAN TROOP DRAWDOWN IN ETHIOPIA WOULD NOT INDUCE MENGISTU TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE, CIENFUEGOS REPLIED THAT SUCH A VIEW IS "EXCESSIVELY SCHEMATIC". HE POINTED OUT, FURTHERMORE, THAT SIAD BARRE HAS NOT KEPT HIS PROMISE TO US AND IS STIRRING UP PROBLEMS IN OGADEN.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 HAVANA 01804 02 OF 02 290445Z

12. BEGIN COMMENT: CIENFUEGOS' WARM COMMENTS ON SECRETARY'S AFRICAN POLICY STATEMENT (ALBEIT INTERMIXED WITH USUAL COMPLAINTS ABOUT OTHER SENIOR US OFFICIALS), COUPLED WITH HIS FAVORABLE STATEMENTS ON PRESIDENT CARTER'S REAFFIRMATION OF CLARK AMENDMENT, ARE FIRST POSITIVE ATMOSPHERICS WE HAVE SEEN IN RESPONSE TO RECENT US AFRICAN POLICY MOVES. CIENFUEGOS ALSO SEEMED TO BE ENDORSING AMBASSADOR MCHENRY'S ANGOLAN EFFORTS AND EVEN APPEARED TO DANGLE PROSPECT OF FUTURE CUBAN TROOP WITHDRAWALS IN EXCHANGE FOR RESTRAINT BY MOBUTU. CIENFUEGOS, HOWEVER, WAS EVERY DEFINITE - US MUST PURSUE ITS CONCERN OVER CUBAN TROOPS WITH INVOLVED AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS, NOT WITH CUBA.

13. ON ETHIOPIA, CIENFUEGOS SEEMED LESS OPENMINDED ON QUESTION OF CUBAN TROOP WITHDRAWALS. HE APPEARED INTENT ON CONVEYING THE THOUGHT THAT, WHILE CUBANS AND MENGISTU NOW HAVE SOME DIFFERENCES, HAVANA STILL FEELS OBLIGATION TO BACK ETHIOPIAN LEADER. THEREFORE, CUBAN EFFORTS TO NUDGE MENGISTU TO NEGOTIATION TABLE WITH ERITREANS WOULD PROBABLY NOT INVOLVE EFFORTS TO PLACE MILITARY SQUEEZE ON HIM.

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